

The rights and protections of our Nation's military veterans, especially in light of their continuing sacrifices in Iraq, Afghanistan and other dangerous lands, should not permit the unfair and wrongheaded employment policies by the Federal Government to stand. I am proud to support the selfless and patriotic sacrifice of our Nation's military veterans, and I urge the swift consideration and passage by the Congress of this necessary and important legislation.

LANE EVANS POST OFFICE
BUILDING

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 29, 2007

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 521, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2633 11th Street in Rock Island, Illinois, as the "Lane Evans Post Office Building."

Lane Evans completed 24 years of remarkable service to his nation as a member of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. His work here reflected the principles that guided him throughout his life. Lane's concern for our military men and women, the environment, and those less fortunate speaks to his character and commitment to make life better. But it was his unwavering support for the Nation's veterans that best defined his time in Congress. Agent Orange, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Spina Bifida, and expanded services for women veterans are just some of the causes for which Lane will be fondly remembered by his colleagues and our veterans.

I served on both the Armed Services and the Veterans' Affairs Committees with Lane, and have always respected his counsel, especially in his role as my Ranking Member when I chaired the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Even when we disagreed on policy matters, I never doubted that his positions on veterans issues were rooted in his service as a United States Marine during the Vietnam Era. Lane is a man of integrity, compassion, and honor.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 521. Naming this post office is a small, but lasting and appropriate way to honor Lane, and I hope those who visit this facility will recognize the contributions of the man for whom it is to be named.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOSS AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to salute Foss Avenue Baptist Church as it celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Church's founding. The congregation will hold a banquet on March 24th in my hometown of Flint, Michigan to mark the occasion.

In late 1956 several ministers in Flint meet with the purpose of organizing a Baptist church on Foss Avenue. It was agreed to organize a church and the first applications for membership were made. The first members were Preston Johnson, Emma J. Simpson, Marvell Arkansas, and Reverend and Mrs. Avery Aldridge. A motion was made to name the church Foss Avenue Baptist Church and on December 2, 1956 the new church was born.

The original church was dedicated on January 6, 1957. Under the direction of Pastor Avery Aldridge the second church building was entered on March 30, 1958 with the cornerstone being laid on March 22, 1959. The church was rebuilt in 1964, and the west addition was dedicated on February 9, 1969. The cornerstone was re-laid on December 10, 1978 when the north and south side additions were dedicated. As the congregation grew Pastor Aldridge organized many auxiliaries and services under the auspices of Foss Avenue Baptist Church and the congregation moved into the current sanctuary in 1989. In 2005 the original sanctuary was renovated and dedicated as the Mildred Light Aldridge Christian Education Center.

Through the years the members of Foss Avenue Baptist Church have contributed to the church enterprises. Foss Avenue Baptist Church has an active Usher Board, a Music Department, a Foreign Mission Board, Church School Department, Mother's Board, Deaconess Board, a Trustee Board, Mission Department, and Kitchen Entourage. In addition the congregation operated Foss Avenue Christian School and the first Black Dairy Queen in the Flint area. Through the efforts of this congregation, thousands of persons have been helped, inspired and educated.

Pastor Aldridge devoted his life to making Foss Avenue Baptist Church a reflection of God's glory and a beacon of light to the people of Flint. Under the current leadership of Pastor Roosevelt Austin, a lifelong friend of Pastor Aldridge, the congregation continues to respond overwhelmingly to God's call and to carry on His work.

Madam Speaker, please join me in applauding Foss Avenue Baptist Church as it celebrates 50 years of worship, fellowship, and homage to Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The clergy and members are to be commended for their service to their community and world.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 718 NATIONAL GUARD EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 2007

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 718, the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007.

The National Guard needs a voice to ensure that its people get the same training, equipment and benefits as their active-duty counterparts. It needs a voice to speak for the needs of governors and the guardsmen who defend and protect us from natural disasters and acts of terror.

Asking the Department of Defense to approve one four-star General for the National

Guard and allow this Guard General a seat at the Joint Chiefs of Staff is not overly reaching or a threat to national security. It's simply a matter of providing a seat at the table to an organization that has earned it.

When it comes to the Guard, Cold War thinking still prevails at the Pentagon. So a bipartisan and bicameral group of Members of Congress stand united behind this bill. This year, we have added three important provisions to: allow Guard officers to advance to the highest ranks of leadership; force better accountability in service procurement for the National Guard; and, define and improve the fractured planning and operational relationships between the Department of Defense, the National Guard Bureau, U.S. Northern Command and our Governors.

After 9/11, the President issued an Executive Order making the security of the homeland the No.1 priority of the Department of Defense. But the Department's attempts to empower the Guard have so far been date have been hollow, with no clear standards, no firm requirements and only minimal funding.

The Department of Defense seems to be in denial about the essential role the National Guard plays in times of need. The Pentagon needs to show more concern for the force that protects Americans first, arrives first, acts first and stays longest.

Today, the Government Accountability Office released a study sponsored by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee entitled: "Actions Needed to Identify National Guard Domestic Equipment Requirements and Readiness." This study points out that the Department of Defense has yet to take decisive action to improve the National Guard's domestic capabilities and clearly points out why this basic Guard empowerment bill is absolutely necessary.

If you want to know why the Guard deserves a seat at the table, take a look at what the Air Force has budgeted this year for First Air Force, which is made up of the nation's top Air National Guard wings. These are the fighters who protect the skies over America. Their command budget and manpower is being cut almost in half. And it should come as no surprise that these Air Guard wings are not on the Air Force list to get F-22s or F-35s.

Last year's BRAC decimated Air National Guard units that provided critical airlift capability during Hurricane Katrina, moving people, water and supplies through catastrophic damage. Without that capability, we may be in a worse position today in terms of emergency supply movement than we were when the storm struck.

Or consider the readiness of the Army's chemical and biological response units, most of which rest in the Reserve Component units. GAO soon will release a study sponsored by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee that will show the Army has not seen fit to enhance these units for homeland defense. As a result, Americans remain vulnerable to the chemical-biological attack many fear likely if not inevitable.

A year and a half after Hurricane Katrina, the findings and basic recommendations in the Select Committee Report on Hurricane Katrina have not been adequately addressed.

Moreover, the National Guard continues to perform valiantly in the Global War on Terrorism. The National Guard provides almost half the manpower, support and transportation

our military uses overseas, yet it has just 35 percent of the equipment it needs. The time has come to fix this.

Since 9/11, every single person in this country has benefited from the exemplary service provided by the men and women of the Guard. I urge the new leadership in this Congress, as they examine defense policies and budgets, to keep in mind the needs of these brave men and women, who for too long have been treated as second-class citizens by our military. This country cannot afford a broken state/federal response to homeland emergencies.

Madam Speaker, those National Guardsmen responsible for our homeland defense and military assistance to civilian authorities deserve the resources, planning and training they need. These reforms are long overdue, and the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007 represents an essential step in the right direction.

HONORING RONALD PHILLIPS—3
MILLION MILES ACCIDENT FREE

HON. DAVID DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ronald Phillips, a resident of the First Congressional District of Tennessee, who has recently accumulated over 3 million accident-free miles during his career as a truck driver.

In June 2004, Ronald was the first driver to receive the 2 Million Mile Safe Driving Award at Con-way.

His other accomplishments include: 25,000 Safe Driver & Worker Hours Distinguished Driver Recipient; Member Con-way Freight's Elite President's Club; Quarterly Leaders Award from Con-way; National Finalist for Ray O'Brien Award in 2003, 2004, and 2005; Tennessee Truck Driving Championships—2nd place in straight truck class in 2006; Highway Watch Member; Certified Driver Trainer and Mentor; Con-way Defensive Driver Trainer; National Eagle Scout Association Member; Regional Values Task Force Member for Con-way; Member Trucker Buddy International.

Ronald Phillips is an AWANA leader at his church and has participated in several mission trips and charitable work.

Ronald Phillips resides in Gray, Tennessee with his wife of 23 years, JoAnn. They are the proud parents of one daughter, Regina (21) who is graduating from King College this year.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my fellow members to join me in honoring Ronald Phillips, a testament to hard-work, determination and the values that have made this Nation so great.

HRANT DINK'S DEATH A LOSS FOR
MANY

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I supported H. Res. 102 and I condemn in the

strongest possible terms the cowardly murder of journalist Hrant Dink in Istanbul on January 19. I find particularly contemptible the actions of those who seemingly chose a seventeen-year-old youth—the alleged killer—to commit this appalling crime. This despicable act should not, however, obscure the inspiring solidarity of tens of thousands of secular, Muslim, and Armenian Christian Turks who filed past Mr. Dink's bier and marched in his funeral procession. Western news media have estimated the crowds between 50,000 and 100,000. Important Turkish officials, such as Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin; Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu; the governor of Istanbul, Muammer Guler; the head of the security forces, Celalettin Cerrah; and two generals joined Arman Kirakossian, the deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia, and other Armenian officials at the funeral service.

Everyone in the world who cherishes freedom and brotherhood must take heart when signs proclaiming "We are all Armenians" are carried through the streets of Istanbul. I wish to express my condolences to the family and friends of Hrant Dink. I want also to express my profound respect for all his fellow citizens who protested his murder and mourned his death.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUDGET
AUTONOMY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, next to H.R. 328, the bill to give the District its first full vote in the House, the bill we introduce today is the most important bill to the District of Columbia that will come before Congress this session. The District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act that Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member TOM DAVIS and I introduce would give the District the right to enact its local budget without annual congressional oversight. The original Senate version of the Home Rule Act provided for budget autonomy, and 32 years of unnecessary difficulties and delay occasioned by the extra layer of oversight offer ample evidence that the time is at hand for Congress to permit the city to enact its local budget and move forward immediately to operate and manage the city.

This is the most important of the bills to be introduced as part of the "Free and Equal D.C." series of bills designed to accomplish two goals: (1) to give the city control over its core functions, such as budget, legislation and criminal justice; and (2) to transfer to the District the Home Rule Act provisions that prescribe the city's structure and others that make it necessary to come to Congress for changes, as well as many other provisions that have been included in the Act over the years. Budget Autonomy is most important because the ability to enact a budget and spend its own taxpayer funds as authorized is central to a jurisdiction's ability to operate and manage a functioning government. For that reason, the budget process is essential to the right to self government. By definition, Congress will retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under Article I, Section 8 of the

Constitution. Since, therefore, Congress could in any case affect changes in the District's budget and laws at will, it is unnecessary to require lengthy repetition of the District's budget process here. The redundancy of the congressional appropriations process is its most striking feature, considering that few if any changes in the budget itself are made.

I am gratified that Congress itself has moved toward the position embodied in this bill. The congressional experience with the District's budget has matured, and year after year, Congress has made no changes. At the same time, there has been increasing recognition of the hardship and delays that the annual appropriations process causes. As a result, Congress has already begun freeing the city from the congressional appropriations network. Last year, Congress approved the Mid-year Budget Autonomy bill, offering the first freedom from the federal appropriations process, the most important structural change for the city since passage of the Home Rule Act 32 years ago. The District can now spend its local funds annually without congressional approval, instead of returning mid-year to become a part of the federal supplemental appropriation in order to spend funds collected since the annual appropriations bill. Moreover during the past few years, appropriators have responded to our concern about the hardships resulting from delays in enacting the D.C. appropriation. I appreciate the agreement that has allowed the local D.C. budget to be in the first continuing resolution, permitting the city to spend its local funds at the next year's level. This approach has ended the lengthy processes that began years before I was elected, whereby the D.C. budget was delayed for floor fights about local policy and laws unrelated to the budget.

I have long argued that budget autonomy would benefit the city financially and operationally without withdrawing congressional jurisdiction. Only statehood would completely eliminate congressional power over the budget, but that option is not available at this time because the Mayor and City Council turned over the costs for some state functions carried by the city to the federal government in 1997. However, permitting the local budget to go into effect on time benefits the District and the Congress alike. For the city, a timely budget would: eliminate the uncertainty of the congressional process that in turn affects the city's bond rating and adds unnecessary interest for local taxpayers to pick up; significantly increase the District's ability to make accurate revenue forecasts; and reduce the countless operational problems, large and small, that result when the city cannot proceed on budget on time. Among the many examples, one particularly comes to mind that resulted when the D.C. budget was enacted five months late. Despite significant cuts in most functions, the city had increased the budget of the D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), but DCPS was forced to spend at the prior year's levels under a Continuing Resolution without the benefit of its urgently needed increase. As a result, for example, textbooks had to be returned to publishers under contract provisions; school supplies were returned; school buses under the bus lease contract were reduced, creating longer rides for disabled children; and tuition payments for special education students went unpaid.

Leaving its local budget to the District also would bring benefits to Congress. The D.C.